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EDITORIAL

LIGHTS, CAMERA . . . REACTION

President Reagan is a reactionary—in every sense of that word, including the most literal. He does not have a policy, a set of principles, on which to base action. What moves him are external stimuli, the actions of others: it is all reflex, the classic knee-jerk. He reacts, he doesn't act.

He has attitudes, of course, and sentiments. They are a ragbag of nostalgic illusions based on what he himself never experienced and what never was in this country outside of myths. And yet he conducts himself and his office as if these notions were an animating force.

Reagan's reactionary behavior is most visible these days in two areas, one geographic and the other strategic. In Central America the reaction is to a revolution affecting 20 million people in a half a dozen lands that have insisted on being nations while the United States treated them as provinces. Reagan's aim in that region is to push them back into the *status quo ante*, back at least as far as the days of Woodrow Wilson, the careless intervener. Nothing could be more reactionary, or inept, or hopeless. Turn back the clock and let "Major Bob" d'Aubuisson assume the murderer's mantle of Somoza I and II.

In matters of strategy, the exclusive area of the superpowers, Reagan is fired by the ancient fervor of anti-Communism even as public support for the Freeze intensifies. When he wrings out more money for useless weapons to "catch up" with some sort of stupidly contrived "superiority" of the Russians, he seems to be acting. But it is really all reaction. The old cold-warrior foe of SALT (arms limitation) moves from START (reduction) to STALL (limits on limitations).

What could be worse than Reagan reaction? Perhaps only uninhibited action. Let us hope it doesn't come to that.

TAKING SADAT OUT OF EGYPT
Christopher Hitchens

SEX ABUSE BEHIND BARS
Ann Jones

BUSINESS JOURNALS
Alan Wolfe

MAKING INFORMATION PRIVATE
Anita R. Schiller
Herbert I. Schiller

'MISSING' AS CULTURAL TRUTH
Andrew Kopkind

REAGAN SOWS THE WIND

THE NEW AGE OF PROTEST

FRANCES FOX PIVEN AND RICHARD A. CLOWARD

Large-scale protest in the United States now seems certain. With 9.9 million unemployed, 1.3 million too "discouraged" to look for work and millions more on short time or part time, the Reagan economic policies are undermining the lives of a broad stratum of working people. The programs on which people could once fall back—food stamps and Medicaid, especially—are also being cut, and surveys show that it is among the poor, the minorities and the unemployed that laissez-faire beliefs are weakest, class consciousness highest and skepticism toward government deepest. In other words, the politicization of economic issues is most advanced among those most affected by Reagan's economic and social policies.

Moreover, these hardest-hit groups will be emboldened to protest by the rising anger among better-off groups. The significance of this aspect of the coming conflict has hardly been noticed. We know from earlier periods of great social and political upheaval that the simultaneous defection of different constituencies is always dangerous to a political regime. Insurgent peasants can be repressed by force of arms, and perhaps the American poor can be too. Peasants cannot so easily be repressed when other groups also become insurgent, however, and neither are the American poor so vulnerable to repression by an Administration that simultaneously and boldly antagonizes other and more influential groups.

And there is good reason to think protests will escalate on all sides. The environmental lobby, for example, with its constituency among the better-off, is already openly indignant at the Reagan Ad-

(*Continued on Page 463*)

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LETTERS.

DE MOTT JUSTE

White Plains, N.Y.

Congratulations on Benjamin DeMott's splendidly perceptive article on George F. Will ["The Pursuit of . . . Charm," *The Nation*, March 27]. Readers familiar with the best seller of an earlier day will realize that Will is Little Lord Fauntleroy, shaking his golden curls at Late Capitalism and saying, "Lean on me, Grandpa." *Margaret Halsey*

QUESTIONING DIAMOND'S UPDATE

Larchmont, N.Y.

In his letter "F.B.I. At Harvard: Update" [*The Nation*, March 13], Sigmund Diamond quotes from a letter written by a Federal Bureau of Investigation agent to J. Edgar Hoover in which the *possibility* is raised that Harvard President James B. Conant *might* provide secret information concerning the Russian Research Center because Conant "has on occasion indicated his respect for the Bureau's work." Hoover replied, according to Diamond, that he didn't need Conant for this information.

To Diamond such "evidence" proves that Conant cooperated with the F.B.I. This type of thinking is reminiscent of Senator Joseph McCarthy, who interlaced suppositions and innuendoes in order to smear people. One can "prove" whatever one wishes, but truth requires more than conjecture or wishful thinking. *Bernard S. Miller*

GUNNING FOR TANAKA?

Bethesda, Md.

I read with interest John G. Roberts's article ["America and the Making of Japan Inc.," *The Nation*, Feb. 13] in the special issue on Japan, and I wish to correct a misleading impression that arises from his piece. Discussing the Lockheed case, Roberts states: "Since all the original evidence and testimony in the case was gratuitously supplied by American sources, primarily the [Securities and Exchange Commission], it is possible that some segments of Wall Street, the State Department or the intelligence community set out to 'get' Tanaka, Osano and Kodama . . ."

I was the counsel to the Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations, chaired by Senator Frank Church, that uncovered the Lockheed payments in Japan and the Kodama connection, revealed in the public hearings which the subcommittee held. The fact is that the evidence and testimony were not gratuitously supplied by American sources but were provided to the Japanese at the express request of the Japanese prosecuting authorities. The State Department and the Justice Department reluctantly agreed to procedures for the transmittal of the information uncovered by the subcommittee, which had not been made public in the hearings, to the Japanese authorities.

There are many unanswered questions that arise out of the Lockheed affair, and particularly the Kodama connection, not the least of which involve possible links between Kodama and the U.S. intelligence community. Given the facts as I know them, however, it stretches the imagination beyond reasonable conjecture to imply that there was some plot among Wall Street, the State Department and the intelligence community "to get" Tanaka et al. *Jerome I. Levinson*

ROBERTS REPLIES

Tokyo

I had no intention of making an invidious comparison between the Church Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations and the Securities and Exchange Commission, both of which tackled some of the nagging questions that lingered in the wake of the Watergate cover-up. In retrospect, I would say that although the two organizations were diligent in following many of the same leads from Lockheed and its auditors, the Church subcommittee was more forthcoming and revealed important information that the S.E.C. had intended to keep confidential.

As much as I regret this comparison, it is peripheral to the main points at issue. The first is that the Lockheed scandal in Japan resulted from the investigation and the public release of information by the U.S. government; the information was supplied gratuitously in the sense that it was unsolicited and undesired by the Japanese government. The February 4, 1976, hearing on the Japanese phase of the case, conducted so effectively by Jerome Levinson, was immediately and widely reported here, accompanied by nearly complete transcripts of the testimony and citations of evidence. Several important names were mentioned, and other information enabled journalists to identify venal politicians whose names had been suppressed, so that the pattern and the dimensions of the scandal were soon apparent.

Levinson is technically correct in stating that testimony and evidence not made public in the hearings were requested by the Japanese government, and were supplied reluctantly by the United States. However, the procedures agreed upon were not only intentionally cumbersome but also precluded the release of further information to the Japanese public. By thwarting the opposition parties and confusing the voters in this way, U.S. and Japanese authorities enabled the ruling party in Japan to engineer a massive cover-up. The actions on both sides amounted to obstruction of justice.

This was not unexpected, since key Japanese officials—the justice minister and the chairmen of the Public Safety Commission and the Lower House Budget Committee entrusted with hearings on the case—were all veterans of allied conservative factions that had participated in the first Lockheed scandal (1959) starring Yoshio Kodama. The cover-up in the United States was assured by President Ford, who had hamstrung the multinational investigations in advance by pardoning Nixon, and by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who was instrumental in securing a court order prohibiting disclosure of the names of foreign government officials involved. Kissinger did so at the urging of his predecessor, William Rogers, whose law firm represented Lockheed. These men had good reasons for wanting to suppress information held by the Church subcommittee and the S.E.C. . . .

In short, the release of names and the indictment of suspects seems to have been highly selective if not discriminatory. While I did not intend to suggest a "plot," one can easily imagine some identity of motives on the part of Wall Street financial groups (exasperated at being cheated out of huge contracts by Lockheed's dirty tricks), the State Department (unwilling to jeopardize its carefully cultivated, pro-American conservative mainstream) and the intelligence community (fearful of having its threadbare cover blown by thorough and comprehensive investigations). *John G. Roberts*

LOCATING THE ZOO STATION

New York City

Reviewing *Christiane F.* ["Films," *The Nation*, March 20], Robert Hatch writes: "One is surprised that the revolting traffic in drugs and sex at the Zoo station goes unnoticed by the authorities. Perhaps it is because the station is in East Germany and the victims are West Germans."

This remark might make sense as something more than reflex anticommunism were it not for the fact that the Zoo station is in West Berlin. *Arthur M. Zipser*

CORRECTION AND INVITATION

*In Mark Green's piece "There He Goes Again: A Column" [*The Nation, *March 6], the following sentence should have appeared after Ronald Reagan's statement that he "appointed more blacks to executive and policy-making positions than all the previous governors put together": "According to an official at the Archivist Office for the State of California, 'I don't think it's possible for [the President] to know that, for you'd be going clear back to November 13, 1849, when Peter H. Barnett was elected as the first governor.'"*

Readers are invited to send examples of the President's misstatements to Mark Green, c/o The Nation, *72 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011.*

—The Editors

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EDITORIALS.

Falkland Fever

"When British territory is invaded it is not just an invasion of our land, but of our whole spirit. We are all Falklanders now." Thus *The Times* of London in its lead editorial of Monday last week. Attempting to capture the mood of the island race, the paper made a direct comparison with Hitler's assault on Poland. Indeed, said *The Times*, Argentina's aggression was, if anything, rather worse: "The Poles were Poles; the Falklanders are our people. They are British citizens." There are other differences, too. The British had not been arming Hitler as they have, despite liberal protests, been arming the Argentine junta, last year to the tune of $22 million. In fact, the aircraft carrier used in the Falkland annexation was sold to Argentina by the Royal Navy only a few years ago.

The hypocrisy goes deeper even than that. Until this spring, the British Foreign Office had been trying its hardest to *give* the Falklands to Argentina. Only the stubbornness of the island inhabitants frustrated a deal by which the islands would have been leased back to Britain after it admitted Argentine sovereignty over them. And in any case, the citizenship issue was due to die a natural death. Under a new racist immigration law in Britain, designed primarily to deny citizenship to nonwhite people from the Commonwealth, the children of Falkland Islanders will no longer

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have the right to call themselves British citizens.

None of this has prevented an explosion of patriotic ballyhoo in Britain of the sort hardly seen since Lord Kitchener went to Khartoum. Prince Andrew is packed aboard the H.M.S. Invincible and sent off to do battle, while the docksides are black with wailing debutantes. The spirit of Dunkirk and Trafalgar is invoked on every broadcast.

But here another irony emerges. Not content with arming the Argentine junta against its own people, the British government has also been in harness with it over El Salvador. No British protest was heard about the dispatch of Argentine "advisers" to that country. Prime Minister Thatcher was the only European head of government to send observers to the recent Salvadoran "elections." She was also the only one to endorse the State Department's scandalous white paper on El Salvador last year.

When the Turkish Army invaded Cyprus, a country which Britain was bound by treaty to defend, the British did nothing. When the South Africans sent troops to Rhodesia, a country under legal British protection, the British did nothing. Now that the Argentines have invaded the Falklands, Britain finds itself shorn of moral authority.

The Argentine action is, of course, indefensible. While it may have been aroused by the smell of offshore oil, its chief motivation was obviously a wish to solidify national feeling behind the repulsive regime of Lieut. Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri. Nobody credits the trotted-out charge of "colonialism," because there are no non-British inhabitants of the islands and (as must be evident from the chaotic British naval response) no bases either. Argentina, already stinking internationally for its anti-Semitic frenzy, its massacre of dissidents and its opportunistic pro-Sovietism, is similarly without moral authority.

So the ball, interestingly enough, now rests in Ronald Reagan's court. Both of the contending governments are military and political allies, usually eager to do him honor. Both of them are involved in helping to discipline El Salvador. Both have collaborated in schemes for fashioning an alliance between NATO and the "Southern Cone" of despotic regimes in Latin America. Both have found, in each other, the enemy they deserve.

The poor Falklanders have already been forgotten in the outbursts of national chauvinism. The emerging question is—which of his two clients will Reagan choose to betray?

'De-Sadatization'

If, instead of visiting the pyramids by the main tourist road, you get on a horse and approach from the desert side, you will come upon a highly diverting piece of archeology. Half buried in the dunes is a pile of miscellaneous rubble. On this site stood Anwar el-Sadat's private villa, built without planning permission a few years back. It was here, and in some neighboring eyesore villas built by his cronies, that the late leader liked to receive delegations of journalists and other flatterers. A few weeks ago, with the permission of President Mubarak, the whole lot was bulldozed. Soon, there will be no trace.

This is about as far as Egypt has gone in the promised "commemoration" of Sadat. True, the main square in Cairo has been named after him, but nobody refers to it by anything but its old name, and signs still point to Tahrir Square. Portraits of Sadat, which used to be so common on the public billboards, have all but disappeared. There is open criticism of his rule in the press. Many of his former associates, who enriched themselves so promiscuously by exploiting his *infitah* (open door) economic policy, are in prison for corruption. There are many Sadat jokes making the rounds, not one of them friendly.

I paid a call on Mohammed Heykal, the Arab world's senior journalist, who looks considerably thinner after being imprisoned by Sadat without charge or trial. He told me that on the day of the funeral (which attracted more American ex-Presidents than it did ordinary Egyptians), he had only one question for his prison warders. He asked them, repeatedly, to tell him what Mubarak was wearing in the cortege. After some delay and bewilderment, he received an answer. The new President had been wearing an ordinary blue-black suit. "I knew then," said Heykal, "that things were going to change. Sadat had a different gaudy uniform for every occasion."

The days of ostentation, when Madame Sadat and the Revlon Company would fly in Frank Sinatra to croon for floodlit banquets at the pyramids, are certainly over. Mubarak is a man of extreme modesty and reticence. He has canceled the series of "victory" parades announced by Sadat for the return of Sinai, and said that the money will go to house the poor. He has jailed Rashad Osman, the "godfather" of the port of Alexandria, for his abuse of high office by drug smuggling and bribery. He has said in public that Sadat deceived him about the terminal state of the national economy and that only on becoming President did he learn that the Egyptian budget was running at a serious deficit instead of at a surplus. He has taken a stronger line on autonomy for the Palestinians and refused to visit Jerusalem because of the Israeli annexation. He has almost emptied the prisons of political detainees, leaving only the most benighted of the Moslem Brotherhood behind bars. Those released, including Heykal and Nawal Saadaawi, Egypt's leading feminist, have been invited to meet Mubarak and tell him of their criticisms. Among the released socialists and the returned exiles there is something very like euphoria.

How did all this happen so quickly? Who could have guessed that "de-Sadatization" would be so swift? Heykal corrects me at this point. "It is not de-Sadatization," he says. "It is normalization. Sadat followed a sham theatrical policy, designed to impress Walter Cronkite and Barbara Walters. He made a fool of Egypt in the Arab world. No country can follow a policy that is against its very *geography*." Heykal is not a friendly witness, but in the past (especially on Camp David) I have found him a reliable one. He argues convincingly that Sadat emerged from a unique conjunction of crisis and defeat; that he was basically an illusionist with a talent for manipulation; and that the Egyp-

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tian people were fed up with him long before his murder.

The last point is definitely a truthful and testable one. It is very common to hear expressions of sympathy for Lieutenant Istambuli and his assassination team, especially from the poorer classes. "The day they execute him," I was often told, "will be a very uneasy day for the government." As Heykal says, it is usually forgotten in the West that Sadat built his entire political career on his junior role in a political assassination. What impresses people about Istambuli is that, unlike Sadat, he was prepared for the certainty of death.

Still, that is a separate question from the wider issue of the Islamic fundamentalism that Istambuli represents. This plays the part of a political Janus in Egypt. With one face, the Sunni authorities have traditionally cooperated with the ruling powers, whoever they may have been. With the other, the Moslem Brotherhood became Nasser's most bitter enemy and several times tried to kill him (a compliment he repaid with interest and enthusiasm).

Egyptians are not as xenophobic as many other Arabs, nor as rich, and secular propaganda and socialist rhetoric still have an appeal. So Mubarak clearly hopes to isolate the religious extremists by economic reforms, as well as by taking a sterner line on matters like Jerusalem. (Lieutenant Istambuli's group called itself Al Aqsa, after the chief Moslem shrine in that city.) He may be having some success. Once the fundamentalists have shouted about corruption, betrayal in the Holy Land and Jewish conspiracies, they have more or less exhausted their program. I interviewed several Egyptian socialists who had been in prison with them, and they reported a deep confusion among the extremists on their objectives and a sullen silence on social reforms.

There are, on the best evidence available, three factions. The mainstream Moslem Brotherhood, which used to publish the magazine *Al Dawaa* (*The Call*) and may be allowed to do so again, holds to the view that Egypt is a Moslem country that has become unworthy of the name; it calls for reconversion of the people, but by persuasion. Then there is a group whose title translates roughly as "Repentance and Flight from Sin," which a few years ago shot and killed Jordanian Foreign Minister Wasfi Tel on the steps of the Cairo Sheraton; it holds that true believers must leave Egypt, make a new pilgrimage in the footsteps of the Prophet, and return afresh with his message. Finally, there is Jihad (Holy War), which says that Egypt is no longer a Moslem country and must be won back by the sword.

Adherents of the three groups do not like one another and did not cooperate in prison. They would not even pray together and quarreled about, for instance, Koranic authority for hunger strikes.

This disarray may persist for some time. The real question is how far and how fast Mubarak can make himself master of the situation. It seems that after the imprisonment of Rashad Osman of Alexandria, he received a flood of letters, signed and anonymous, reporting on other equally putrid aspects of the Sadat establishment. The press, the ruling party, the Parliament and most of the regional governorships remain firmly in the hands of Sadat's appointees.

Islamic extremism, then, is the property of everybody and nobody. Like a prostitute, it can be picked up in the streets. When Mohammed Heykal gave an interview recently in which he averred that Lieutenant Istambuli had popular sympathy, he was swiftly answered by Musa Sabry of *Al Akhbar*, long Sadat's favorite journalist. Heykal, said Sabry, had given this interview to a paper (*The Sunday Times* of London) which was owned by Rupert Murdoch. "Murdoch," Sabry continued, was a notoriously Jewish name.

This little episode illustrates, briefly and pitifully, how the use of religious and extremist propaganda can cut both ways. In a very poignant piece of his memoirs (mentioned in *Sadat*, by David Hirst and Irene Beeson, published by Faber & Faber), Sadat lovingly recalled his own part in the murder of Amin Osman, a pro-British stooge, in 1946.

> According to plan, Hussein Tewfik was waiting for him at the door of the building. As Osman was about to take the elevator, Tewfik fired his pistol at him. Tewfik, in calling him, applied the [Moslem] rule that forbade the shooting of a man in the back.

It was an injunction, interestingly, also obeyed by Istambuli.

The present position is even more fraught with irony. Many of the leftists who, openly or secretly, are grateful to Istambuli are also on the death list of one or another Islamic fundamentalist group. But to hear them talk, you would think they regarded the Moslem Brotherhood and its clones as only a misguided faction of the left. It is true that both the left and the fundamentalists (and Mubarak) have a convergent position on Jerusalem. But it is also true that the left should learn from Iran. In the last resort, Islamic loyalties are more easily conscripted by Sadat types and conservatives than they are by socialists and revolutionaries. Both sides may think they are using the other for tactical purposes. For the Egyptian left, however, like the Iranian, it is a question of being the hammer or the anvil.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Christopher Hitchens is a contributing editor of The Nation.

Omen of Spring?

Although generally ignored by the media, a recent student uprising at the flagship campus of the University of Puerto Rico serves as a vivid example of what the Reaganite Revolution has meant for American education—and may portend what's ahead for mainland campuses in the coming weeks.

The five-month strike at the 23,000-student Rio Piedras campus in San Juan stemmed from the decision by the Puerto Rican Council of Higher Education to triple tuition at the public institution. This increase was needed, education officials claimed, to raise $15 million to repair the university's physical plant and thus prevent a loss of accreditation. Yet the effort to raise the money resulted in dozens of arrests,

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tear-gassing and clubbings by police, student vandalism, a hunger strike, several shutdowns of the campus—and ultimately a cost to the university of an estimated $500 million.

At first glance, complaints about the tuition increase seem unfounded: it was the first in over thirty years, and tuition costs were only $15 per credit for undergraduates and $45 per credit for graduate students, far less than on the mainland. But it must not be forgotten that Puerto Rico is trapped in an economic nether world. For years the population has suffered the effects of runaway inflation while facing a staggering unemployment rate ranging anywhere from 20 percent to 45 percent. The annual median income for island families is half that of families on the mainland, and per capita income is only $3,724 per year. With Reagan's 1982 budget eliminating 25,000 CETA jobs and $500 million in Federal aid, and the 1983 cuts expected to lop off an additional $300 million to $700 million, Puerto Rico faces real economic hardships.

Before the tuition hike, 62 percent of the students were receiving some type of financial aid. Recognizing this, students and faculty urged the education council to impose an "adjusted increase" scaled to family income. Nevertheless, just days before the start of the fall semester last year, an across-the-board increase was announced.

The five months of protest that followed were marked by intransigence and violence on both sides. Student property attacks and classroom disruption seemed to increase, however, when it became clear that the administration was determined to break the strike rather than to negotiate. All extracurricular activities, demonstrations and assemblies were banned by the chancellor. Three thousand students were dropped from school, and the student council was declared no longer "legally constituted." Strike leaders, representing groups as disparate as the Catholic Action Youth and the Federation of University Pro-Independence Students, were arrested or suspended, as were the presidents of the Association of Puerto Rican University Professors and the Brotherhood of Non-Teaching Employees. University guards were supplemented by undercover agents and then by riot squad regulars. The full-scale occupation of the campus by the riot squad was a critical factor in weakening the strike.

Another weapon in the administration's arsenal was the propaganda device of labeling all the strikers "communists" and "lawbreakers," although support for the protest was widespread. The strategy, as directed by Governor Carlos Romero Barceló, who favors statehood, was to use the strike to discredit both the main opposition party, which endorses commonwealth status, and the smaller but highly visible independence movement. Barceló linked the strike to "disruptive militants" and insisted that he would "preserve the peace and tranquility in all of Puerto Rico"—no matter what the cost.

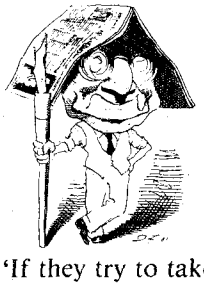
The strike was finally broken, 146 days after it began. The newspaper *El Vocero* proclaimed: "Marxists Beaten at the UPR." In one sense it was right, for the leftists among the students won no triumphs this time. But in another it was badly misleading, for it suggested a victor where none could exist: the university is still poor and still strapped, only now it has gained the animosity of much of its community; the government is still hurt by heavy fiscal cutbacks dictated by the Reagan Administration; and the students, of all political stripes, have had to endure half a year of violence and disruption and still the university is looking to their pocketbooks for relief.

The experience of the University of Puerto Rico is not likely to be an isolated one. The Reagan Administration, stating that "parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children," has made it apparent that only rich parents will be able to afford that responsibility—and that applies not only to offshore islands. As the economic pinch tightens across the mainland and further education cuts make things even more difficult for college students across the land, the reaction may be very much like that in Puerto Rico. The Rio Piedras strike could be just the beginning of a new period of campus turmoil.

FELICIA E. HALPERT

Felicia E. Halpert, a former Nation *intern, is a freelance writer based in New York City.*

Izzy Says...



An obscure voice from the Falkland Islands strikes a note of sanity for a larger world growing more frenzied. A carpenter (what an echo of forgotten Gospel!) in the main town of the islands, Stanley, tells *The Times* of London as the British fleet advances: "If they try to take Stanley they will destroy Stanley. Everything is made of wood here. Half a dozen fires and a good wind and the town will be gone forever."

The same day, half a world to the north, Secretary Haig in a full-dress declaration of policy says the United States will neither accept a nuclear freeze nor forswear first use of nuclear weapons—because it must protect "the essential values of Western civilization."

The planet is as fragile as tiny Stanley. How do you protect civilization by threatening to set a match to it? How do you preserve its values by such loose and brutal talk from a hysteric who was all set for Armageddon many months ago essentially to preserve brutal oligarchies over peasant serfs in the backwoods of Central America?

How preserve peace in a volatile and unsteady thermonuclear age when statesmen act as if they were wearing leopard skins and brandishing spears, dancing themselves into a fury against those barbarous and benighted savages over the next hill?

Must we suffer voodoo statecraft as well as voodoo economics?

I. F. STONE

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UNCIVIL LIBERTIES.

CALVIN TRILLIN

I've been worried lately about the possibility that *The Nation* is acquiring a reputation for being a bit pinko. I was born and brought up in Kansas City, and I'm not really keen on the folks at home getting the impression that I work for a left-wing sheet. They know I do this column, of course—my mother told them—but most of them have not inquired deeply into *The Nation*'s politics, perhaps because my mother has been sort of letting on that it's a tennis magazine. She has been able to get away with that so far because *The Nation* is not circulated widely in Kansas City: in the Greater Kansas City area, it goes weekly to three librarians and an unreconstructed old anarcho-syndicalist who moved to town after his release from the Federal prison at Leavenworth in 1927 and set up practice as a kvetch. Lately, though, I've had reason to worry that *The Nation*'s political views may be revealed in the press.

My concern is not based on any notion that the people back home would react to this revelation by ostracizing my mother for having given birth to a Commie rat. Folks in the Midwest try to be nice. What I'm worried about is this. People in Kansas City will assume that no one would write a column for a pinko rag if he could write a column for a respectable periodical. They might even assume that payment for a column in a pinko rag would be the sort of money people in Kansas City associate with the summer retainer for the boy who mows the lawn. They could even go to the library—or to the home of the kvetch, who holds on to back issues in case they're needed for reference in sectarian disputes—and look through my columns until they find the one that revealed the luncheon negotiations in which I asked the editor of *The Nation*, one Victor S. Navasky, what he intended to pay for each of these columns and he replied, "Somewhere in the high two figures." Then the people at home, realizing that I had struggled for years in New York only to end up writing a column in a pinko rag for lawn-mowing wages, would spend a lot of time comforting my mother whenever they ran into her at the supermarket. ("There, there. Don't you worry one bit. Things have a way of working themselves out.") My mom's pretty tough, but tougher people have broken under the burden of Midwestern comforting.

Without wanting to name names, I blame all of this on Victor S. Navasky. During the aforementioned luncheon negotiations, he said nothing that would have led me to think that *The Nation* had political views I might find embarrassing. In fact, he sort of let on that it was a tennis magazine. The only reference he made to anybody who could be considered even marginally pinko was when he told me that he had reason to believe that Warren Beatty was keeping his eye on *The Nation* and might snatch up the movie rights to just about any piece for $200,000 plus 5 percent of the gross. "Always get points on the gross, never on the net," I remember Navasky saying as I dealt with the check.

When Navasky provoked a public controversy by attacking a book on the Hiss case from a position that might have been described as somewhat left of center, I tried to be understanding. I figured that Navasky was trying to pump up circulation because he lacked some of the financial resources that most people who edit journals of opinion have. Traditionally, people who run such magazines manage financially because they have a wife rich enough to have bought them the magazine in the first place. It's a good arrangement, because an editor who has his own forum for pontificating to the public every week may tend to get a bit pompous around the house, and it helps if his wife is in a position to say, "Get off your high horse, Harry, or I'll take your little magazine away from you and give it to the cook." I haven't made any detailed investigation into the finances of Navasky's wife, but it stands to reason that if she had the wherewithal to acquire entire magazines she would by now have bought him a new suit.

There is no excuse, though, for Navasky's latest caper, particularly after I had specifically said to him only last year, "I don't care what your politics are, Navasky, but I hope you'll have the good taste to keep them to yourself." A couple of months ago, around the time Susan Sontag charged in her Town Hall speech that left-wing journals had never really faced up to the basic evil of the Soviet regime, *The Nation* began advertising a tour it was co-sponsoring—a "Cruise up the Volga." The other co-sponsors were outfits with names like National Council of American-Soviet Friendship. The advertised attractions included a visit to Lenin's birthplace. I suppose some long-buried smidgen of restraint kept Navasky from simply headlining the ad "Pinko Tours Inc. Offers a Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity to Fellow Travelers." Didn't he know he would be attacked by *The New Republic*? Didn't he know that he would provoke an argument about the possibility that what *Nation* tourists need to examine is not the GUM department store but the loony bins where dissidents are stashed? Didn't he know this sort of thing could get back to Kansas City?

I implored Navasky to cut his losses by explaining the tour in humanitarian terms. Where, after all, are old Commies supposed to go for their vacations—Palm Springs?

"The tour is oversubscribed," he said.

I could see that he was getting defensive. He had the look I noticed when I asked him if it was really true that two elderly Wobbly copyreaders at *The Nation* had been told that their salaries were still being diverted straight into a defense fund for Big Bill Haywood. I knew that in his mood he might even launch some preventive strikes—maybe write an editorial suggesting that *Commentary* give its readers a New York tour that included the Brooklyn street where Norman Podhoretz was first taunted by black kids and the office where Daniel Bell got his first government grant.

"I'm going," I said.

"To Russia?" he asked.

"To call my mother," I said.

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DISPATCHES.

■ THE WEST BANK: Birzeit

Israeli military authorities have long considered Birzeit University in the West Bank a stubborn challenge to their efforts to eradicate expressions of Palestinian identity in the occupied territories.

The university was shut down by military authorities for several months in 1980 after students refused to submit a program for a "Palestine Week" festival to the military governor of nearby Ramallah for approval. Last November, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon ordered Birzeit closed again, this time for two months, after student demonstrations against the new Israeli civilian administration in the West Bank. The university reopened in January, but on February 16 the military authorities shut it down again after confrontations between Israeli officials and Birzeit students and administrators.

The confrontations this time centered on Birzeit's refusal to bend to the provisions of Military Order #854, which in effect places the entire public education system in the West Bank under Israeli control. At Birzeit this has meant nearly unceasing harassment—over work permits for visiting professors, for example, and over the acquisition of books and other educational materials. Birzeit administrators say 1,187 books that their professors wished to use have been banned since 1977, including books on Palestinian folklore and Islamic thought.

The closing of Birzeit last November provoked at least one important response inside Israel. A group of academics formed the Committee for Solidarity with Birzeit and organized a demonstration in Ramallah on November 28 to protest against what the committee called "an atmosphere of continual terror." Israeli soldiers broke up the demonstration with tear gas and clubs and arrested forty-nine Israeli protestors, charging them with illegal assembly, entering a closed military zone and incitement. "We learned then what it was to be an Arab Palestinian in the West Bank," committee organizer Avraham Oz of Tel Aviv University told a meeting last month in Berkeley, California, where he was appearing as part of a U.S. speaking tour.

According to Oz, the Committee for Solidarity with Birzeit has grown rapidly since the demonstration and was a major force in organizing a March 27 rally in Tel Aviv which attracted 20,000 Israelis in protest against government policies in the occupied territories. Munir Fasha, dean of students at Birzeit, who accompanied Oz on the lecture tour, said of the new group: "The committee has called for the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. It came and shared our life in Ramallah. It is a great step forward."

■ NICARAGUA: Credit Blockade

Since April 1 last year, when U.S. economic aid to the Nicaraguan government was suspended, Nicaraguan leaders have charged that the Reagan Administration is working to deny them access to international credit sources.

Until recently, the charge has seemed exaggerated, partly because from 1979 to 1981 Nicaragua received $1.1 million in concessionary loans, mainly from financial institutions in the United States, Europe and Latin America. But now—although the Sandinist government still has the staunch economic support of most European countries, Mexico, Brazil, Libya and the Communist nations—doors of leading financial institutions in the United States are being shut in its face. Nicaraguan fears of a "credit blockade" orchestrated by Washington do not appear so exaggerated anymore.

In November, Nicaragua withdrew its application to the U.S.-dominated Inter-American Development Bank for a $30 million loan after the U.S. representative indicated his intention to line up votes against it. And in December, Secretary of State Alexander Haig cabled instructions from Europe to the American representative at the World Bank to vote against a $16 million loan for Nicaragua; it passed anyway, with all other member countries voting in favor of it.

But even the World Bank, which had been bullish on Nicaragua from 1979 to 1981, is starting to sour on the Sandinists. According to the March 17 *Washington Letter on Latin America*, a confidential World Bank staff paper recommends reducing or even entirely cutting off World Bank lending to Nicaragua because its government hasn't "defined the rules of the game" for the private sector.

The situation looks grim at private U.S. banks too. In spite of Nicaragua's scrupulous attention to renegotiating all debts with these banks, it has been unable to swing any new loans in over a year. The U.S. Comptroller has reportedly classified loans to Nicaragua as "substandard," and Nicaraguan companies are finding it difficult to get even ordinary letters of credit, which are the necessary grease of international trade.

Meanwhile, the Reagan Administration is making sure that aid continues to flow to the groups in Nicaragua that represent alternatives to the Sandinists. According to the State Department, $10.4 million in Economic Support Funds were granted last year to Nicaraguan business groups, anti-Sandinist unions and cooperatives, and the Catholic Church. The U.S. Agency for International Development plans to give $5.1 million in fiscal 1982 to groups such as the Superior Council of Private Enterprise and the Chamber of Commerce. Both organizations, which are bastions of anti-Sandinist activity, are slated to receive $200,000.

■ ITALY: Pax Romana?

The emergence of a group of "peace Catholics" in the United States has come as a surprise to many [see John Deedy, "The 'Peace Catholics' Speak Out," *The Nation*, March 20], but perhaps even more astonishing are the signs of antinuclear sentiment in the ranks of the traditionally conservative Mother Church in Italy. Last fall, a number of priests were active in organizing the protests that brought a

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I believed in the ideology of *Business Week*, I would have no choice but to trust *Petroleum Intelligence Weekly* more.

In his letter asking me to subscribe to *The Wall Street Journal*, Peter Kann relates a homey story. "On a beautiful late spring afternoon, twenty-five years ago," he begins, "two young men graduated from the same college." It turns out that these men became virtual clones; both are ambitious, intelligent and married, and both have been employed by the same company since graduation. Yet by the time of their twenty-fifth reunion, one had become the president of the company and the other was a mere manager of a small department. Why? You guessed it. The implication is that the president had the moxie to subscribe to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Anyone who reads a story like that and is moved to subscribe deserves, in my opinion, the ideology he gets. America's business publications are often fun to read, for they have the money to hire good writers and researchers. But if you read them to find the truth, to uncover the knowledge that will give you power, you are, like millions of others, on the wrong rung of the great corporate ladder of success. □

'THE PRIVATIZING OF INFORMATION'

Who Can Own What America Knows?

ANITA R. SCHILLER AND
HERBERT I. SCHILLER

Appropriation of public resources for private enrichment, long familiar in the American experience, has now come to the newest valuable resource, information. With almost no public notice, the national stock of information, created through heavy public expenditures over the years, is steadily being removed from government custodianship and transferred to private ownership and control.

Actively promoting the privatizing of information on behalf of the new and already influential corporate information sector is the Information Industry Association. Founded in 1968, the Washington-based I.I.A. numbers among its more than 150 members some of the most powerful information companies in the country, including I.B.M., Time Inc. and divisions of The New York Times Company and the Chase Manhattan Bank. On its board of directors are representatives from McGraw-Hill, Dow Jones, Lockheed, Xerox, Mead Data Central and The Washington Post Company.

The I.I.A., whose members produce, package, transmit and disseminate information, claims that its primary goal is "to promote the development of private enterprise in the field of information and to gain recognition for information as a commercial product." Commonplace and benign as that may appear, it represents the reversal of a national commitment to the ideal of public knowledgeability and the informed citizen. "Information as a commercial product" is information that is produced for profit. Who can pay for it and how much it will cost become questions that affect everyone.

Information today is being treated as a commodity. It is something which, like toothpaste, breakfast cereals and automobiles, is increasingly bought and sold. It is every bit as much a physical asset as a pool of oil—it has become an essential factor in the running of the modern American economy—and indeed, supplies of the former are coveted by the business world nearly as much as the latter.

Of course, information had commercial uses and was sold long before we realized we were living in an Information Society. What is different today is that a much wider range of information has become profitable because it can be flexibly processed, selectively rearranged, and quickly transmitted and disseminated by a virtuoso new technology.

The new reality is evident everywhere. Books are "products," the Supreme Court has ruled, holding that publishers' book stocks are no different from general commercial inventories. In some cases, scientific and technical information has been placed under export control. Productivity measures have been applied to colleges and universities. Educational institutions have signed agreements with private corporations selling the rights to exclusive use of research findings.

The bulk of the national information supply is gathered by Federal agencies or is paid for by the government's large research-and-development expenditures. The cumulative holdings in the government information reservoir—census data, Congressional hearings and reports, consultants' research, departmental studies—are immense and of increasing economic value.

The private information venders are now turning to these holdings systematically and diligently. Undaunted by the widely held belief that the public has a right to information that it has paid to have produced, they have substituted the notion that nothing that can be done privately should be undertaken by the government. They—and their representatives at the I.I.A.—supplement this wisdom with the insistence that information has to be sold at a profit. Social need is regarded as irrelevant.

In the process, control of the national information base is being rapidly shifted from the public domain into private hands. If the information industry has its way, no public facility or institution involved with information will be spared.

One of the leading targets of the demolition effort is the Government Printing Office. The G.P.O. historically has been the publisher and disseminator of government-

Anita R. Schiller, reference bibliographer at the University of California at San Diego, writes often on information questions. Herbert I. Schiller's most recent book is Who Knows: Information in the Age of the Fortune 500 *(Ablex).*

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financed and government-generated information. Although it never really fulfilled its responsibility for getting information to the public, in recent years the G.P.O. has been severely constrained and its role dramatically reduced. Budget cutbacks have hurt; so has the failure of many government agencies to use the G.P.O. as the publisher of their materials. Most damaging was the creation in 1964 of a parallel agency in the Department of Commerce, the National Technical Information Service.

N.T.I.S. has taken over a great share of government publishing activity while adhering to the I.I.A. standard of operations. "All the costs of N.T.I.S. products and services, including rent . . . salaries . . . and all other usual costs of doing business," runs a brochure the service issued, ". . . are paid from sales income, not from tax-supported Congressional appropriations." But even that is not enough for the I.I.A. It is now urging that N.T.I.S. be dismantled and that its publishing duties be performed by private information firms.

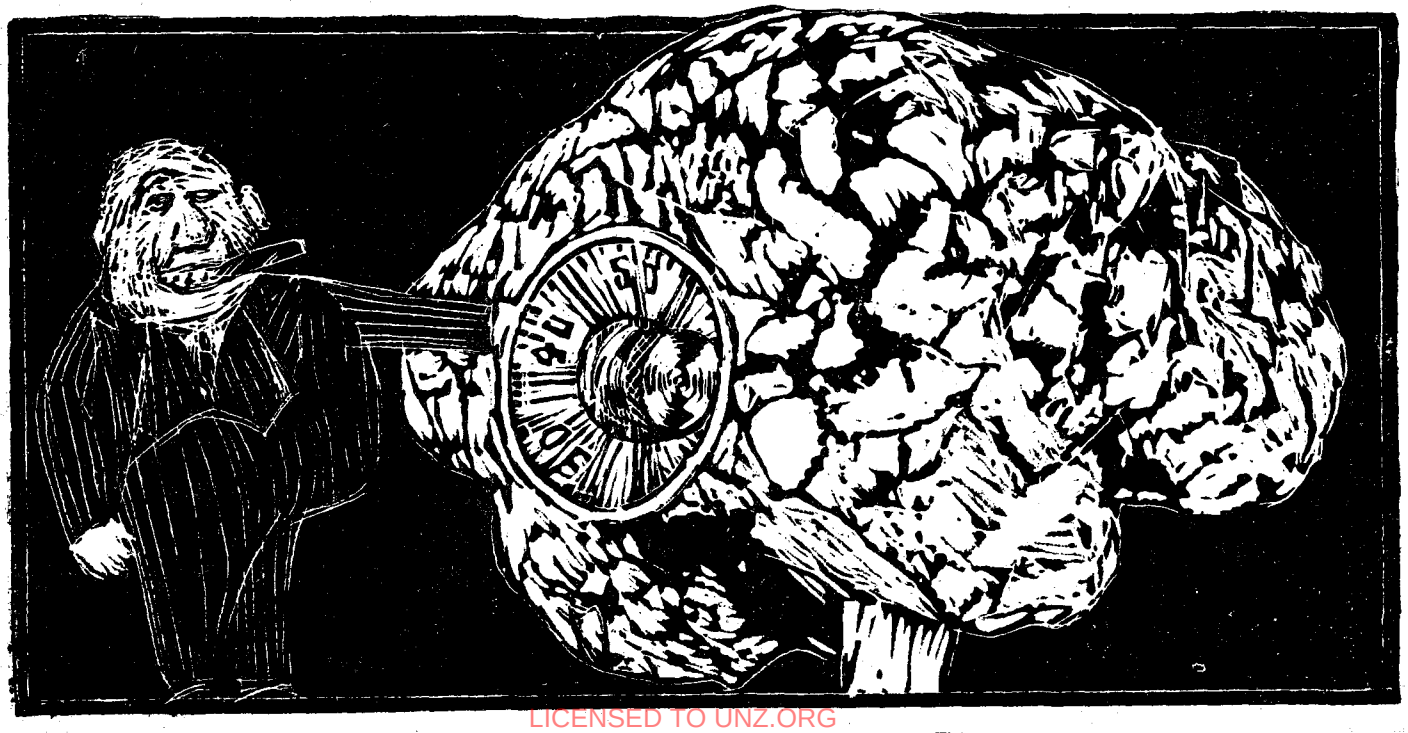
The G.P.O. was also dealt a harsh blow by a provision of the Federal Paperwork Reduction Act, signed into law in December 1980. The act gave the Office of Management and Budget discretion over what publications the G.P.O. should publish. Government documents librarians at that time pointed out the dangers of this arrangement: "To have an entity [O.M.B.] which is typically preoccupied by matters of cost and which is perceived as one of the government agencies least accessible to the public, establishing policies regarding citizen access to government information requires some guarantee of balanced decision-making regarding the collection, management, use and dissemination of information."

In April 1981, President Reagan and the O.M.B. ordered a moratorium on new periodicals, pamphlets and audiovisual products. In November, it was reported that more than 900 items had been canceled—with more cuts expected this year—many of them concerned with food, diet, health, energy, social welfare and other matters of daily life.

In January, the Public Printer announced his desire to close twenty-four of the twenty-seven G.P.O. bookstores around the country because, he claimed, they compete with the private sector and are not profitable. The widely distributed monthly release "Selected U.S. Government Publications," issued free by the superintendent of documents of the G.P.O., announced in the same month that its January issue was its last. It offered this consoling alternative: "For those who want more comprehensive information about sales publications, we suggest you subscribe to hard copy *Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications* ($90.00 domestic; $112.50 foreign per calendar year) or the microfiche *GPO Sales Publication Reference File* ($125.00 domestic; $156.25 foreign per year)." The justification the G.P.O. gave for terminating this useful tool was that it was not self-sustaining as the law requires. That is another instance of the I.I.A.'s success in having laws interpreted in a way that facilitates the destruction of public information.

The efforts of the private information industry are not limited to crippling the G.P.O. Information firms have been trying to compel the National Library of Medicine to impose higher fees for the use of its computerized information services. The I.I.A. helped force the National Institute of Mental Health to phase out access to its database, which had been available at relatively low cost and included material on social aspects of mental health literature not available elsewhere. (Although this phase-out has been attributed to budgetary cutbacks, it had also been sought by such groups as the I.I.A., which accused the institute of competing with a private operation.)

There has also been increasing pressure on the National Depository Library System to introduce market forces in making acquisitions for the more than 1,300 libraries it serves. In existence for more than a hundred years, the



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depository system "provides for a class of libraries in the United States in which certain Government publications are deposited for the use of the public."

The I.I.A. has urged replacing this arrangement with a system of cash payments by which depositories could choose privately prepared information packages. Under that plan, however, there is no guarantee that any depository would maintain the comprehensiveness of its collection, and they would all be subject to a wide variety of competing interests. If they succumbed to corporate blandishments, that would have the effect of encouraging more and more firms to privatize more and more information. To date, the I.I.A.'s views have not prevailed, but its pressure is unrelenting.

Other government information activities as well are under attack—an attack so heavy that in January the Washington, D.C., office of the American Library Association, in a document titled "Less Access to Less Information By and About the U.S. Government," could point to "what seems to be an emerging pattern of restricting citizen access to government information."

Various censuses, surveys and reports are being discontinued or threatened by budget cuts. The Federal statistical system is in disarray. Crucial national income data are threatened. Compilations by the Social Security Administration of basic data on industrial and occupational classifications of workers may be discontinued. The Federal Trade Commission is considering stopping its quarterly financial reports. The Census Bureau has delayed some population reports, and in February it laid off 500 employees.

Federal data of use to business is also in jeopardy, but here the private sector is eager to help. When the Census Bureau canceled its plans to release reports by zip code, a consortium of large companies was established to buy the computer tapes from the bureau and compile the information for its members.

To be sure, the public interest is being manhandled by the market in many related fields: public mail service is weakened by the switch to electronic mail; cheap and reliable telephone service succumbs to A.T.&T.'s desire to concentrate on trunk lines and computer hardware; commercial television declines as networks sell their most popular programming to pay-TV. Yet the damage in the information sector threatens to be greater and longer-lasting. Once withdrawn from its social context and made into an item for sale, necessary information may just not be available. Not because of censorship, though this is no small concern, but because it will be controlled by the marketplace. Information we should have or might need may never be gathered, much less organized and transmitted. And if it is, it will have to be purchased.

With the destruction of public information, the basis of democracy disappears. In the new era, the upper tier is for the "information rich," more abundantly supplied with images, symbols and information than ever before. Below, in the pit, are the "information poor," the "have nots" in the Information Society. Democratic participation in the processes of government will surely suffer. □

Protest

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

ministration's policies. Religious, student, civil rights and civil liberties groups are beginning to stir in opposition to Reagan's foreign and domestic policies. These groups were crucial in past movements, and they are likely to be important again, for their organizing resources and networks are formidable and their influence on public opinion considerable. Moreover, memories of the civil rights struggle and of the protests against the war in Southeast Asia are still fresh, and the participants from those movements are still very much alive.

Organized labor will be important. True, many on the left are disappointed with the past performance of a union leadership grown increasingly conservative. But its conservatism was encouraged by steady economic improvement, which kept rank-and-file members relatively satisfied. That leadership is likely to be radicalized by the pressure of a rank and file indignant over rising unemployment, provocative antiunion Federal policies and intense corporate efforts to roll back earlier wage and workplace victories. Moreover, the unions also have a substantial stake in social programs, for a number of these programs protect their unemployed members. Unions in the low-wage service sector also have reason to fight the effort to flood the labor market with welfare mothers and the disabled.

The aged, too, are an important oppositional constituency. When Reagan successfully pressed Congress to abolish the monthly minimum Social Security payment of $122 in the summer of 1981, the organized aged protested and Congress restored it. Moreover, the aged have a stake in protecting programs other than Social Security and Medicare. The aged poor benefit from about 40 percent of Medicaid expenditures, 33 percent of food stamp expenditures and a significant portion of housing subsidies.

There is reason to believe that women will also become a significant oppositional force. Female political values tip to the side of peace, greater equality and economic security. Until recently, women have not been free enough of men to act on those values, even at the moment of casting a secret ballot. But in the 1980 elections, a gap of 8.5 percent appeared by sex, with women showing greater opposition to Reagan on matters of foreign policy, militarization, equality and the social programs. Bella Abzug called attention to the significance of this gap [see "Forming a Real Women's Bloc," *The Nation*, November 28, 1981], which held across class, religious and racial lines:

> Although the press made much of Reagan's having won the blue-collar vote, 50 percent of female blue-collar workers voted for Carter, and only 43 percent for Reagan. Reagan

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> won 47 percent of the votes of male union members, but only 39 percent of unionized women's votes. Carter won 45 percent of the unionized men's vote and 53 percent of the unionized women's votes. . . . Catholic women gave more votes to Carter than to Reagan—45 percent to 43 percent; Catholic men gave 56 percent of their votes to Reagan and only 35 percent to Carter. Of the Hispanic vote, which was skewed in Reagan's favor by male Cuban émigrés, 62 percent of the women and only 42 percent of the men voted for Carter. Among the overwhelmingly anti-Reagan black voters, women turned out in larger numbers than men.

A constituency composed of half the voters that can deliver an electoral plurality of 54 or 55 percent has enormous potential political power. And Reagan is doing much to activate women. He is heightening the threat of war, increasing inequalities and intensifying economic insecurity, especially among women. Under these conditions, it seems probable that the women's movement, which has been faltering, will be spurred to new activism, particularly if the Reagan Administration accedes to the clamorous right wing and takes up the so-called "family protection" issues, including the issue of abortion. And even if the Reagan Administration manages to keep these social issues in abeyance, the women's movement has been given a dramatic opportunity to broaden its base. It has so far been a modernizing and market-oriented movement, much preoccupied with expanding the opportunities of better-educated middle-class women, and as such has been damaged by its failure to reach out to poor and working-class women. Now it has the opportunity, for the Reagan attack on social welfare programs is very much an attack on the poorer women who make up the majority of program beneficiaries.

The simultaneous provocation of a broad range of citizen groups is a dangerous game for a government in another way. Mass protests are contagious, as we know from past periods of political insurgency. It is not simply that people mimic each other; it is that mobilization among some groups provokes the hopes and aspirations of other groups and shows them a way to act on those hopes. Such contagious effects are more likely at this stage in the development of American capitalism, for the underlying connections between an imperial foreign policy and a harsh domestic policy have become clearer than ever before. Economic decline in the Northeast and Midwest has made many working people aware that one source of their troubles is the flight of American capital to other regions and states as well as to other countries where labor is kept cheap by dictatorial regimes supported by gifts of American arms and the technology of repression. The very boldness of the multifaceted Reagan program casts these intertwined connections in sharp relief—connections between foreign policies and social policies, between social policies and regulatory policies, between regulatory policies and labor policies—and exposes the corporate interests that underlie them all.

The contemporary social welfare state affords new opportunities for mobilization. There now exists an enormous array of agencies and programs oriented to popular grievances. Of course, the Reagan Administration is reducing budgets and even abolishing some programs. It is also firing some of the Federal civil servants who staff these programs, and no doubt intimidating a good many others into silence. But for all of its zeal, it cannot simply eliminate the huge and intricate state apparatus created in response to a history of popular demands. Nor can that apparatus be effectively disciplined, for much of it lies beyond Federal control. The historical pattern of decentralization thus has an ironic contemporary significance, for it resulted in many popularly oriented programs being lodged in state and local governments and in private institutions that receive government contracts or are reimbursed by government for services provided. This large and intricate apparatus, together with the millions who staff it, is beyond the reach of the Federal government; it stands as a source of internal bureaucratic opposition.

The state and local agencies and staff will be seriously affected by the budget cutbacks and the new Federal constraints. Moreover, the prospect of larger and larger cutbacks means that more and more of these workers will lose their jobs, and that will become a cause for opposition. Their opposition can assume enormous importance because they are directly linked to the far greater numbers of people who will lose benefits or services or protections. For instance, the millions of teachers, health workers and social workers and state, county and municipal civil servants all interact with tens of millions of parents and patients, clients and citizens. In the past these interactions have often been hostile and antagonistic, for agency personnel were inevitably targets of much popular discontent. Now, however, the Reagan Administration has set the stage for these groups to make common cause. Not only are the agencies and their personnel a natural and far-flung network for organizing but these personnel, together with their tens of millions of citizen clients, constitute a veritable electoral host. James O'Connor, an economist who teaches at the University of California at Santa Cruz, put the point this way: "The social democracy built into the . . . bureaucratic structure is perhaps the main domestic problem facing big capital."

Under these circumstances, the New Federalism itself will be turned against the Administration. Governors, county supervisors and mayors attempting to cope with the explosive pressures generated by the new Federal policies will try to deflect popular anger upward. That was their strategy during earlier periods of popular insurgency: the United States Conference of Mayors, for example, was formed in the early 1930s to demand Federal help in dealing with the turbulent mass of unemployed, and in the 1960s it was again a vehicle for pressuring the Federal government to respond to urban unrest. When political leaders thus lend their prestige to the legitimation of popular grievances, as Tocqueville and others have long instructed us, the climate of denunciation becomes far more intense. In eighteenth-century France, it was mainly the *philosophes* who denounced the regime for its oppression of the people. In late twentieth-century America, the *philosophes* will be joined by a federalism divided against itself.

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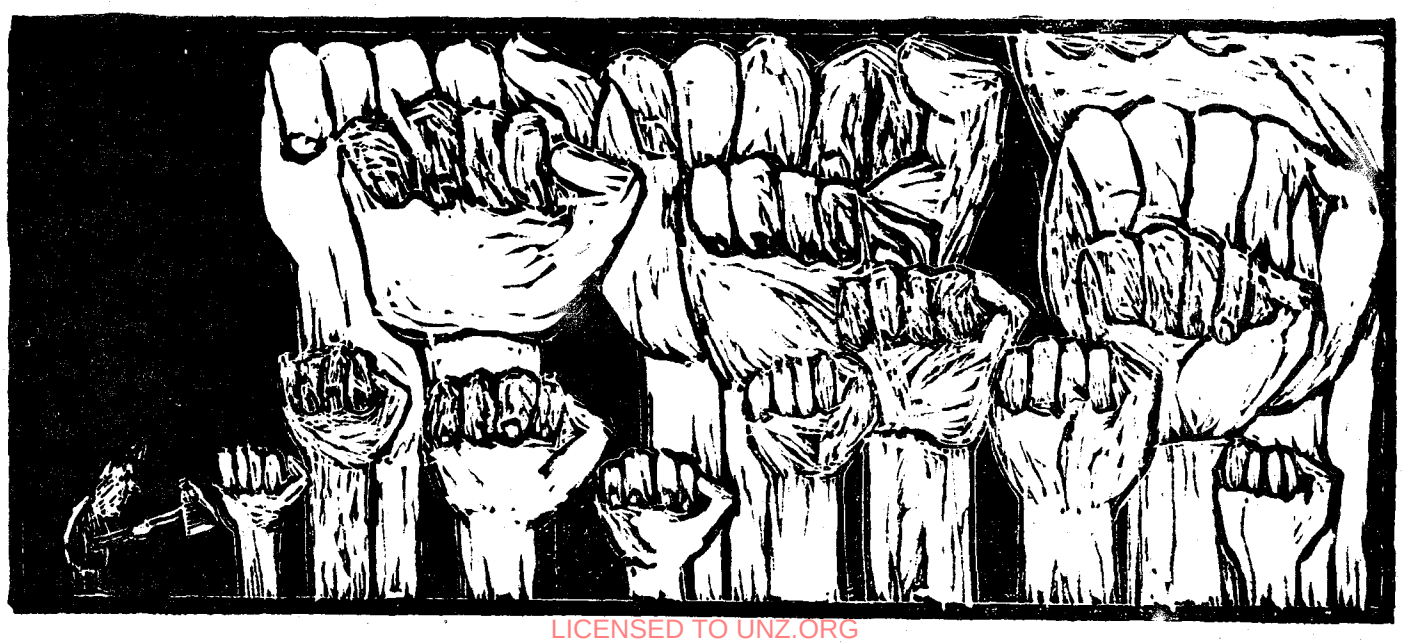
Even with widespread opposition to the Reagan program, victories are not likely to be quick and easy, for the Administration and its business allies are formidable and determined, and they have already entrenched their interests in the Federal budget through huge tax cuts. The threat of defeat at the polls will matter greatly, however; in fact, it is critical. But the processes through which the electoral threat can be made effective are more complex than they appear at first glance. No mere tallying of public opinion will be enough, for public opinion needs articulated outrage and articulated alternatives to assume a clear form, and the advantages of the uses of propaganda are with the Administration. The political parties themselves have become propaganda machines, more completely than ever before. The party infrastructures that once reached into the neighborhoods and towns have withered. Instead, a congeries of shifting moneyed cliques competes for control of the parties by means of vast and sophisticated advertising campaigns. One such clique now rules the country.

But democratic influence was never realized only by taking opinion surveys or counting votes, for the decisive advantages of control of communications networks—and other resources for the manipulation, co-optation and coercion of public opinion—were always at the behest of the moneyed interests. Those advantages could never be matched by people who confined themselves to the normal routes of persuasion and electioneering. They were sometimes more than matched when people took to the streets or walked off their jobs or occupied the waiting rooms or the schools or the factories. The advantages of the propaganda machines were sometimes overcome, in short, by mass protest. When people defied the rules of everyday life, when they stopped the machines or stopped traffic, the disruptions they caused articulated the outrage, made visible the demand for new alternatives, and sometimes mobilized a sufficient following to jeopardize the electoral success of political leaders who failed to respond. The electoral threat has always been activated and organized by movements of mass protest.

If democracy can no longer be contained, and if it cannot be stamped out either, then we are at a historic turning point in the development of American institutions. The point to which we have come is historic because democracy has indeed generated very large problems for capitalism. These are not the simple problems of big government, for capital itself requires a large and intrusive state. Rather the problems occurred because some of the activities of an enlarged state were shaped in response to popular economic grievances. Now, as in the past, popular economic grievances are grievances against property, and responses to those grievances have required intrusions on property.

In this sense, the "crisis of democracy" theorists have discovered an authentic crisis, although they have failed to identify its sources correctly. Their complaint is that people want more and expect more, with the result that democracies have supposedly become ungovernable. This neutral generality suggests that democratic demands exceed the limits of what is materially possible. However, it is capitalism rather than democracy that has become ungovernable, for it is capitalism that has responded to economic contraction and instability with chaotic disinvestment and speculation.

At the same time, and just as in earlier periods of contraction and uncertainty, capital is trying to maintain profits by reducing the living standards and increasing the labor of working people. The seriousness of this effort by corporate America to rid itself of environmental, health and safety, and affirmative-action regulatory controls does not reflect animus toward big government as such; it reflects the extent to which these controls have intruded upon and constrained the dynamics of capitalist production and profitability. And the seriousness of the corporate effort to reduce the income-maintenance programs reflects the extent to which these policies, by protecting the subsistence of working people, intrude upon and constrain the dynamics of the labor market. By acting to assuage popular economic grievances, the state has weakened the market power of capital. In other words, democracy has expanded to curb the depredations of capital. That, in the end, is what all the shouting is about, and it is indeed something to shout about. □



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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

'Missing': Cultural Battlefield

ANDREW KOPKIND

The State Department is an unlikely critic of current films. It usually prefers to produce its own scenarios of intrigue and adventure rather than focus on the fictions of others. So the department's hurried, heated and highly irregular review of Costa-Gavras's *Missing*—in the form of a three-page "white paper" issued on the eve of the movie's premiere—must mean that more than a movie is at stake.

As most news watchers as well as filmgoers know by now, *Missing* concerns the disappearance and death of Charles Horman, a young American journalist caught in the coup that overthrew Salvador Allende's socialist government in Chile in 1973. Director Costa-Gavras fashioned his film as the story of a father's search for his son against an array of odds and obstacles: mayhem in the streets of Santiago, mendacity in the halls of the junta and duplicity in the American Embassy. At the end of the movie—as well at this current point in the actual case on which it is based—there is a *corpus delicti* but no final determination as to the guilty party, the circumstances of Horman's detention and death or even the motive for the crime.

Despite the deliberate ambiguity of the treatment (Costa-Gavras does not explicitly identify the film's location as Chile), the plot strongly suggests that Horman was executed by Chilean police because he had stumbled upon evidence of U.S. involvement in the military coup, and that the American Embassy covered up its (unspecified) complicity in his execution. But the State Department's broadside on *Missing* addressed only the issue of Horman's disappearance and the alleged cover-up; as so often happens, the public sector is absorbed with political pretext. The crucial context of the case—the uses and abuses of imperial power—was left to the private sector of the press to explore.

Enter Flora Lewis on high horse with gun and typewriter atilt to defend her government's honor. Leading off *The New York Times*'s Arts and Leisure section on the Sunday before *Missing* opened, the newspaper's premier foreign correspondent found "serious ethical, moral and political as well as artistic questions" raised by the film, which she had viewed at a special screening in Paris. Lewis pondered those questions at some length, reviewing the history of American policy in Chile, posing the contradictions of art and politics, musing on the fusion and confusion of reality and illusion, touching on the fashions of "the French left." Her main beef was that Costa-Gavras could not prove that the United States was directly involved in the Chilean coup, and yet he built his film around a mere "conviction" that the involvement took place.

"He is so sure of his suspicions," Lewis wrote, and he "seems to feel so little need of specific evidence to support his deductions from his sense of the general iniquity of power, that one is driven to ask whether his attitudes derive from the fact that he is Greek."

Whatever the national origin of his attitudes, Lewis is against it—and them: "His reasoning is wide-ranging, deductive from a general sense of American policy and methods, based on sentiment instead of specifics. . . . The line between fact and fancy is the line of passion. The image is the reality. The definition of truth has always been difficult, but he doesn't concede the distortion of art. In that way, he winds up distorting fact without even noticing."

Lewis offered three or four "facts" against Costa-Gavras's "conviction" that the United States aided the Chilean coup. There was the testimony of former Directors of Central Intelligence Richard Helms and William Colby that the massive American effort to prevent Allende's elections and then to destabilize his administration stopped just short of supporting his overthrow. Applying standard *Times* research rules, Lewis telephoned Colby to get his denial of U.S. intervention; he had been, after all, head of the C.I.A. at the time of the coup, and if there were any wrongdoing, he would have known about it.

Then there was the word of Ambassador Nathaniel Davis, also on duty during those desperate days in 1973 in Santiago. The unnamed Davis-character in *Missing* appears to be covering up embassy involvement in Horman's disappearance. But Lewis reported that although Davis has admitted all sorts of covert actions against Allende, he "stayed away from violent right wingers and military plots." More than that Lewis concluded, "Ambassador Davis's own personality, the meticulous care he took in separating his own firsthand knowledge from hearsay when he finally wrote in his own defense [in a magazine article some years ago] make him believable."

Finally, Lewis served up the specter of one-time *Times* reporter Seymour Hersh, legendary muckraker of My Lai and various C.I.A. scams, who told her (in another telephone chat) that he had been able to find no smoking gun in U.S. hands apropos the Chilean coup. That seemed to clinch her argument. If *The Times* can't report it, it can't be true.

At bare bone, the structure of Lewis's case against U.S. intervention in the coup looks wobbly. Helms, Colby and even the "meticulous" Davis are hardly fair witnesses. Helms—as Lewis was compelled to mention—is a renowned perjurer, having lied to Congress about covert action. Just the other day (according to a tiny item in *The Times*), Colby said to a television interviewer: "I don't think it is immoral, I think it is quite a proper thing" for the United States to use covert action to "prevent another Cuban-supported government from spreading revolution." (He was speaking now of Nicaragua.) As for Ambassador Davis, his service record of postings—Guatemala in the murderous late 1960s, Chile during destabilization and Angola in the years Kissinger tried to topple the Neto government—ought to lead any prudent investigator to look beyond his engaging personality for traces of dirt on his hands. Finally, Hersh has protested to Lewis and *The Times* that his failure to get that big story in Chile proves nothing except the limitations of his reportage.

If a tribunal were ever empaneled to judge the whole episode, Costa-Gavras would be able to call far more impressive witnesses and introduce much more weighty documentation for his contention of foul play than Lewis

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might manage against it. He has, after all, Horman's own diaries, as well as the first-person account of Terry Simon, Horman's companion in the hotel at Viña del Mar when the coup was launched. Simon, along with Horman's wife, Joyce, and some others in their journalistic circle in Santiago, were spared by the junta. Thomas Hauser's book, *The Execution of Charles Horman*, the principal source for the *Missing* script, is rich in evidentiary detail. And secret State Department memorandums from the period, recently obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by the Center for Constitutional Rights, point up inconsistencies in the embassy's story of what the Americans knew and when they knew it.

But the more the facts of the matter are argued, the more it seems that facts are not the heart of the matter. What angers and annoys the movie's public and private "critics" most is the expression of a turn of mind, rather than the presentation of a piece of policy. To define the offending mentality is to describe that certain set of head and heart that emerged from the tumultuous 1960s, from Vietnam, Watergate, the great and small wars of political and personal liberation, the decline of the American imperium. Whatever it is, *Missing* has it, and the attacks on the film are in some measure part of a broad assault on all aspects of the cultural consciousness it reflects.

Greek though he may be, Costa-Gavras recognizes the American "post-imperial" mind like a native. "The powers that be have to have an enemy," he said when we talked one afternoon in a glassy, classy apartment overlooking Manhattan, just before his movie opened. "This enemy is 'the culture,' and, of course, the larger 'the culture' is, the bigger the enemy seems. It is difficult for people to accept change from one day to another. The empire has its own myths, its machismo, its auto-satisfactions. Now Americans have to learn not to be so macho, not to be the biggest, the strongest, the number one. Because you cannot stop history."

Perhaps uniquely among contemporary artifacts of mass appeal, *Missing* assumes the existence, operation and iniquity (in Flora Lewis's phrase) of an American empire. There have been popular films, fictions and factual works that were critical of policies and politicians—from *All the President's Men* through *Apocalypse Now*—but they have couched their criticism in terms of corruption, quagmire, arrogance and blunder; of criminal insensitivity or psychological decay. *Missing* marks "the system" (a very 1960s construct) as the villain from which all other villainies flow. Costa-Gavras makes his point explicit. "You can't have it both ways," an embassy staffer tells Charles Horman's father, Ed, as the film ends. American interests and Americans' ideals inevitably come into conflict, and it is the interests which must be defended. "They aren't *my* interests," Ed Horman protests. But of course they are, to the extent that Horman's privileges, pleasures and positions are historically contingent on America's far-flung power.

The growing "sense of the general iniquity of power"—that particular power depicted in *Missing*—poses a clear and present danger to those who are committed to defending the traditional system of American interests. Megan Rosenfeld, a *Washington Post* reporter who attended a preview of the movie in the capital, characterized the tension in the audience: "the old dividing line—whether you believe that American officials are capable of collusion with foreign madmen who shoot innocent people at whim—seemed revitalized." She noted that former Senator Frank Church, who headed a Senate investigation of America's role in the Chilean coup, found the film "hits pretty close to home, and it happens in other places, too." Cord Meyer, an ex-C.I.A. covert action director (his greatest triumph was the subversion of liberal student and reform organizations in the 1950s), thought it "incredible that we sit here celebrating a movie that implies American diplomats agreed to this young man's death."

The danger that critics of *Missing* perceive in it—the threat inherent in its ideological assumptions—is especially apparent right now. Of course the old lines are revitalized: events in Central America, as well as in Central Europe, resonate forcefully with the movie's message. The controversy swirling around the film owes as much to the microhistory of the moment as to the macrohistory of the era.

"Six months ago—even six weeks ago—the reaction would have been very different," Costa-Gavras told me. "There is this sudden parallel with El

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Salvador, where people are being killed every day. We see the use of [U.S.] military strength in the background, behind the scenes, while we say that 'those Latin Americans are killing each other, they are like that, they enjoy fighting one another.' In Poland, the Russians do not directly use their own forces; they are in the background, behind the coup. That is one of the lessons the Russians took from America in Latin America: they learned it is politically very negative to use their own troops."

As Costa-Gavras was eager to assert, the parallels between the great powers' policies are imperfect in important ways. But as T. S. Eliot wrote, "all cases are unique—and similar to others." What *Missing* does is emphasize the similarities, and thus it profoundly subverts the legitimacy of the claims of those on the other side of "the old dividing line."

The *Kulturkampf* across that line had entered a critical stage at the beginning of the year. The right (if such inexact categories may be used, for convenience sake) found in the example of Poland a weapon equal in throw-weight to Vietnam, able to blast the left back into the pre-1960s stone age. At last, pieces of the old syllogism, communism-equals-fascism, fell into place. Next: Nicaragua-equals-Cuba-equals-El Salvador, Q.E.D. It was open season on history. The intellectual "mainstream" adopted many of the quack conceptions of the New Right on the political and philosophical issues formulated a decade ago: on feminism, race relations, sexual freedom. In the same issue of *The Times* that presented Flora Lewis on *Missing*, former art critic Hilton Kramer published an essay-review of William Barrett's book, *The Truants*. It amounted to a towering inferno of rage against the New York literary high-life of the last forty years—"the intellectual debris that continues to litter the cultural scene today." The rotters, Kramer charged, were wrong about McCarthyism and the cold war; they were somehow responsible for the Polish crackdown; they "paved the way for the radical outbursts of the 1960s."

But although history, issues and facts were in contention, it was the culture itself that remained the enemy—that mentality which Flora Lewis contemptuously demeaned in her piece on *Missing*: the sensibility that abhors the iniquity of power, that trusts sentiments over specifics, that reasons deductively from history rather than inductively from telephone interviews, that embraces noble ideals when they conflict with ignoble interests.

The ranks of the culture warriors on the right side of the fight are well supplied and at full strength. Film critic Robert Hatch, in this journal, reinforced the line: "as Flora Lewis demonstrates . . . responsible investigators . . . have been unable to uncover any connection between the embassy and Horman's death. . . . Costa-Gavras . . . uses such facts as are available and invents any others he needs to make his case. However laudable his intent, he is on slippery ground."

Over at *The New Republic*, movie maven Stanley Kauffmann similarly charged Costa-Gavras with crimes of logic and sensibility. He saw "no credible motive" for American participation in Horman's murder; indeed, the whole affair looked to him like "one of those jittery accidents that occur in frenzied times." To suggest more sinister connections, Kauffmann thought, was highly irresponsible.

"An urgent book

because today's headlines in Central America cannot be understood if the Guatemalan process and its interruption through intervention in 1954 is not known and understood in this country."—CARLOS FUENTES

"There is an intriguing similarity to some of the phrase-making of the State Department in Central America today... Mr. Schlesinger and Mr. Kinzer have produced an account that lives up to their book's subtitle, 'The Untold Story of the American Coup on Guatemala.' It is a tale of dirty tricks, the manipulation of public opinion, the smearing of the precious few journalists who managed to sense what was really going on, and of foreign policy that borrowed more from Doonesbury than diplomacy. It is a fast-paced and well-documented story... One can only wonder after reading this book if the Soviets and Cubans would have had the measure of success in Central America attributed to them by the State Department today had it not been for the unintended collaboration of Washington itself a quarter century ago."
—WARREN HOGE, *New York Times Book Review.*

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If all of this has a familiar ring, it may be because the *Missing* controversy contains many of the same elements as the debate around the publication of Jacobo Timerman's memoirs of torture and anti-Semitism in Argentina. Like Costa-Gavras, Timerman indicted the United States as a co-conspirator in the system of repression he described. And while Timerman has his many sympathizers, he was widely criticized for excesses of emotion, intuition and suggestibility. Neo-conservative guru Irving Kristol savaged Timerman and all he represented in a *Wall Street Journal* column, in tones reminiscent of the campaign against *Missing*. Kristol dismissed Timerman's charges as irresponsible and dishonest demagogy. Those who defended Timerman were part of "a major intellectual and propaganda campaign . . . mounted by the left and liberal-left" to blur the fashionable new distinction between acceptable authoritarianism of the right and unredeemable totalitarianism of the left. That is, the Timerman issue was part of a larger ideological war.

Now it may be a false sign of spring, but I can feel the first faint shift in the wind of that war. *Missing* did not produce the change, of course; movies don't shake the world. But many of the inherent contradictions, the logical limitations in the "old line" attack on the post-imperial culture, became clearer in the controversy the movie engendered. Greed is not enough, after all; brute force is finally self-defeating. "You cannot stop history," Costa-Gavras wisely said. The generalized failure of America's foreign and domestic policies over the past few months has started the process of invalidating their underlying intellectual premises. There is space now for new coalitions to emerge, for voices to rise, for alternatives to take shape. There are stirrings again on campuses, in the streets, in churches and workplaces. People who have been on the run are digging in. The old dividing line is indeed revitalized, and bigger battles are bound to begin. □

Partisan Journalist

RICHARD ELMAN

Before dying young, John Reed witnessed and participated in two great social revolutions which became extremely messy and corrupt after he was already buried in the Kremlin Wall. Reed's journalism on Mexico and Russia (not to mention his brilliant writing from the trenches during World War I) has been called "idealistic" for its celebration of the revolutionary ideals he attributed to the Bolsheviks and the peasantry of Chihuahua; but Reed was probably not as callow as Warren Beatty has portrayed him in the recent film *Reds*. That's a movie about a romance (and, as we all know, romance is a deepening experience), and it makes only brief reference to Reed's days in Mexico (a few frames at the film's outset show him fleeing a battlefield behind a wagonful of *guerilleros*). Beatty's point is that Mexico was only a passing interlude in Reed's pursuit of Louise Bryant, commitment and death. But that is surely a strange way of looking at an experience that produced *Insurgent Mexico*, Reed's finest writing, a book of such vividness, empathy and daring that much of what passes for personal journalism today does seem callow by comparison.

Insurgent Mexico has just been reprinted by International Publishers (292 pp. $1.95). It seems as fresh today as it did in 1914 when it appeared as a series of magazine articles after Reed's return from Mexico. At the time, the American press was intent on supporting the Porfirista regime and its heirs, and Reed's articles went against the press's prevailing racism and xenophobia by expressing sympathy with an indigenous social revolution that directly threatened powerful U.S. interests.

Reed's account of the Mexican revolution is fragmentary and incomplete—what his eyes and ears took in. *Insurgent Mexico* is a series of personal adventures culminating in the battle for Gomez Palacio and interspersed with sympathetic profiles of Pancho Villa and V. Carranza. Its style is closer to Hemingway than it is to political journalism, and it is often beautifully wrought:

> All the long afternoon we ambled slowly south, the western rays of the sun burning as they struck our faces. Every hour or so we stopped at some station, shot to pieces by one army or the other during the three years of Revolution; there the train would be beseiged by vendors of cigarettes, pine nuts, bottles of milk, *camotes* and *tamales* rolled in cornhusks. Old women, gossiping, descended from the train, built themselves a little fire, and boiled coffee. Squatting there, smoking their cornhusk cigarettes, they told one another interminable love stories.

As is well known, his Harvard chum Walter Lippmann did not think too highly of Reed's writing: he claimed it lacked thought, was too direct, vivid and unmediated by qualifications. No doubt it also put Lippmann off by giving all issues human features. In Reed's Mexican writings we learn what people eat, and where they sleep, and who with, as well as their political ideas; we are shown how they respond to pain and death, and we get a powerful sense of place and time. All this makes it difficult to persist in seeing Mexicans as subhuman rapists and desperadoes.

Reed wrote as he did because that was the best chance he had for understanding an alien tradition of revolutionary violence. He wrote out of his own discomfort and exhilaration, trusting himself as an authority on something he knew little about. I'm sure his confidence in his method was bolstered by what he read in the "bought" press on the other side of the border.

Mexico was Reed's second departure from home, as it were. He'd already visited England and worked as a casual laborer. But in Chihuahua and Durango he was among a different race, among Indians and mestizos, and he did not choose to despise them; there were times when his survival depended upon his trusting them, just as Pancho Villa, their leader, trusted and welcomed him. Through their encounters we watch a process of humanization: "Villa himself stood leaning against a car, hands in his pockets. He wore an old slouch hat, a dirty shirt without a collar. . . . All over the dusty plain in front of him men and horses had sprung up like magic. There was an immense confusion of saddling and bridling—a cracked blowing of tin bugles. . . ."

Insurgent Mexico would make a more cinematic script than *Reds*, I think. It is not the work of a man who had not yet lived but of a young man exhilarated and saddened by the experience of living at great peril. It is also a book with con-

Richard Elman's forthcoming novel is Menu Cipher *(Macmillan).*

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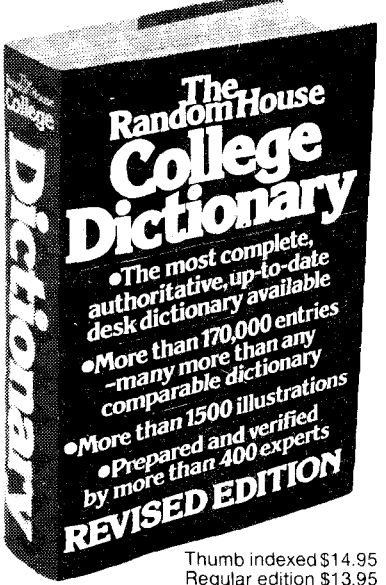
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temporary lessons: As I write this I am listening to a State Department spokesman explain why the United States supports terror in El Salvador to deter "terrorism." A Congressman from California looked out from my television last night to say that if the rebels won in El Salvador, his state would be inundated with Central American refugees; even as he was speaking, the United States was putting off the insurgent forces' request for a negotiated settlement.

The leaders of the Mexican revolution were always trying to explain themselves to the American public and to express their desire to end the fighting, and they were usually rebuffed, which is why they chose military force to gain power. Only then were they taken seriously, and they then became increasingly authoritarian and corrupt, like us.

The fact that we look to Bolshevik conspiracies to explain revolutions in Central America and not to the history of our "good neighbor" to the South is indicative, I think, of our bad intentions toward the area. John Reed was a partisan journalist with good intentions toward Mexico, and that is why he was able to write a book of enduring value and vividness. □

'Persia Deserves Better'

FRED HALLIDAY

ROOTS OF REVOLUTION: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran. *By Nikki Keddie. Yale University Press. 320 pp. $5.95.*

GOING TO IRAN. *By Kate Millett. Coward, McCann and Geoghegan. 334 pp. $15.95.*

Amid the seasonal tide of books on Iran, many of them *hostagiana* or the self-serving memoirs of diplomats, these two works by American women should occupy a special place.

At first sight they are very different in kind. After two decades of studying Iran, Nikki Keddie, a professor of history at the University of California at Los Angeles, has produced the most balanced and comprehensive evaluation of that country's recent history yet available. Kate Millett has written a more personal book—an astute, vivid and angry account of her visit to Iran in March 1979, just after the overthrow of the Shah. Although not a specialist in Iranian culture, Millett had long been an active opponent of the Shah's regime. Her book is especially remarkable then for its account of the sexist reign of terror unleashed by Khomeini's forces soon after they came to power. Millett gives a depressing and convincing portrait of misogynist viciousness, which culminates with her expulsion from the country whose freedom she had championed.

Despite their obvious differences, both books have the same unspoken theme. They implicitly challenge the current belief, shared by Islamic fundamentalists and many Western liberals, that outsiders cannot analyze or understand the workings of Third World societies. This belief takes many forms, but its result is to disable rational assessment and political judgment. While respecting the uniqueness of Iranian society, these two books assert a cautious universalism, a belief that all societies can be analyzed according to general social and historical criteria and that by these criteria oppression can always be condemned. This is the real service that both Keddie and Millett have performed.

In addition to establishing this framework for her discussion, Keddie also sets forth certain additional themes in the past two centuries of Iranian history: the recurrence of popular revolts and urban protests; the twisting path of Iranian nationalism as it wends its way between religious and secular forms of expression; the interventions of foreign powers in support of favored Iranian despots; the rapid and disruptive transformation of Iranian society as a result of enormous oil revenues; the adaptation of Islamic thought by religious thinkers, clerical and lay, in

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Fred Halliday is a fellow of the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam and an editorial associate of New Left Review *and* MERIP Reports. *He is the author of* Arabia Without Sultans: A Political Survey of Instability in the Arab World *(Vintage Books) and* Iran: Dictatorship and Development *(Penguin). He is a regular contributor to* The Nation.

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order to respond to social change and mobilize support for their ideas.

The cogency of Keddie's argument derives from the manner in which the social and economic underpinnings of the revolution are brought into prominence without their obscuring the spiritual and ideological factors upon which Khomeini played. Her narrative includes an account of the religious ideologies invoked during the 1979 revolution as well as of the revolution itself and its aftermath. One wonders a little about the choice of emphasis here: so much attention to the economic inanities of Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, so little to the secular rationalism of Mohammed Mosadeq. It would also have been illuminating to challenge the conventional picture, which insists upon the crucial importance of the conflict between Iranian and non-Iranian values. For what is actually occurring is very much a conflict *between* different strands of Iranian culture, in which various Islamic forces seek to discredit all others as somehow inauthentic. In fact, there is a substantial Iranian literary culture, as "authentic" as you could want, which is the antithesis of Khomeini's thundering puritanism—a culture which is lyrical, witty, hedonistic, shrewd, anticlerical and elliptical. Perhaps having recourse to this culture in its high and low forms will help Iranians survive the nightmare that has befallen them.

The core of Millett's book is her account of the demonstrations organized by Iranian women against the post-revolutionary imposition of Islamic clothing and discriminatory Moslem laws. The slogan of the demonstrators, "In the dawn of freedom we have no freedom," summarizes the nature of their early encounter with the dictatorship that Khomeini has since generalized. Millett argues that although the Shah's regime was an abomination, it has been replaced by a clerical dictatorship equally set on excluding all others from power. "Persia Deserves Better" she aptly laments.

The political message of Millett's visit to Iran was not lost on the new regime, which mobilized the forces of nationalist and sexist demagogy to discredit her. Yet through her anecdotes and portraits of individual Iranian women, she demonstrates the universality of the women's cause. Her book is a rebuke to all the cultural nationalists, pompous "antiimperialist" leftists and obsequious relativists who try to prevent such internationalist actions as hers. But, because of her commitment, her criticisms of the Iranian revolution are also statements of hope, the opposite of the vagrant misanthropy of a V.S. Naipaul.

The force of Millett's book is not diminished by her occasional tendency to overemphasize her own travails nor by the numerous misspellings of Iranian words. Indeed, the gruesome accuracy of her observations has more than stood the test of time. Some of the individuals she encountered have undergone strange transformations: her esrtwhile collaborator in opposing the Shah, Babak Zahrai, is now a left apologist for the Khomeini regime, while the minister who expelled her, Amir Entezam, has been imprisoned and charged with being a C.I.A. agent. The plight of Iranian women has not, however, deviated from the catastrophic course that began with the betrayal of the revolution. For the last few months the walls of Teheran have been covered with posters saying *Marg bar Bihejab*—Death to Those Without Hejab, the Islamic clothing for women. Women with uncovered hair are banned from shops, buses, taxis and government buildings. It is in the accentuated repression against women and men in the Islamic Republic that the vindication of Kate Millett's opposition to the dictatorships of the Shah and Imam is to be found. □

Fragile Gains

MICHAEL SPECTER

THE HARDER WE RUN: Black Workers Since the Civil War. *By William H. Harris. Oxford University Press. 259 pp. $17.95.*

At a recent press conference, President Reagan responded to a question about the severity of unemployment among blacks with his special brand of fatuous sincerity. That very Sunday, he replied, *The Washington Post* carried twenty-four pages of help wanted ads. "What we need is to make more people qualified to go and apply for those jobs," he said, "and we're going to do everything we can in that regard."

Without dwelling on the obvious fact that idle auto workers in Detroit can find little solace in *The Post*'s want ads, it is clear that the Reagan Administration has done nothing to alleviate the special disadvantage blacks suffer in the labor force. Black unemployment now stands at 17.4 percent—the highest level since World War II. The Administration plans drastic reductions in social services and a retreat from affirmative action. The job-training initiatives blacks hoped would "make them more qualified" for work have been eviscerated.

But perhaps the saddest news for blacks struggling to enter the labor market is that the prospects for most of them will not be much better than they are today. This is one of the central lessons of William H. Harris's important history of the black working class, *The Harder We Run*. Harris traces the development of the black working class from the emancipation of 4 million mostly illiterate agricultural laborers to the Supreme Court's *Bakke* and *Weber* decisions. As he moves through two centuries of black social and labor history, Harris documents with precision the pervasive "racism that has made it impossible for blacks to participate fully in American society."

The Harder We Run emphasizes the fact that black workers have always been at the mercy of whites, while whites have been anything but merciful. Without cash or land, former slaves became serfs on plantations whose owners paid them almost nothing. More important, the primacy of agriculture in the post-bellum South kept black children, who were busy farming, from getting the education they so desperately needed. As Harris points out, until the 1960s it was common for black children in several Southern states to attend school for only short days in the fall, spending the rest of their time in the cotton fields.

With the rise of industrial America, hundreds of thousands of blacks moved North, eager to escape the plantations, but they found no promised land there. In Detroit, Chicago and western Pennsylvania there was work, but only such work as whites refused to do. And the

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burgeoning labor unions wanted, nothing to do with Negroes.

It is one of the tragedies of American racism that black and white workers were never able to recognize their common interests and create a solid working-class consciousness. In his discussion of the labor movement, Harris documents the many strikes of white workers who protested employment of blacks, and he reminds us that, year after year, the American Federation of Labor refused to purge itself of rascist unions. With few exceptions, among them the "militant and egalitarian" Knights of Labor and A. Philip Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the House of Labor has remained indifferent to the needs of black workers. Even the Wobblies, the only American union never to organize segregated locals, argued that class not race was the real problem in the United States.

Black workers made their greatest economic gains during World War II, when 1 million of them were added to the industrial force. But Harris sees this as no great leap forward, and he notes that at the end of the war, 80 percent of them were still unskilled workers. With hundreds of thousands of Johnnies marching home, and with the move to a peacetime economy, the good days for black employment were soon to be over.

Only in his discussion of the civil rights movement does Harris let his bitterness overwhelm his statistics. He regards the victories of the 1960s as largely symbolic, and with the current Administration in the process of dismantling these fragile gains, it is hard to disagree. But beginning with *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, black Americans started to lay a legal foundation for equality, and though this foundation may be embattled at the moment, it will survive. Someday, it may even prosper. □

UNKNOWN FOREBEAR

Somebody who knew him
ninety years ago
called him by a name
he answered to
come out now they said to him
onto the porch and stand right there

it was summer and the nine windows
that they could see
were open all the way
so was the front door
and the curtains faded as aprons hung
limp past the sills while he stood
there alone in his dark suit
and white beard in the sunshine

he appeared to know where he was
whose porch that was and whose
house behind him
younger than he was
and who had opened the windows

and who had left the ladder
propped in the branches up the lane
and the names of his children and their children
and the names of the place
with the pine tree out front
and the mullein a foot high growing
on the green bank
beyond the stones of the walk

as he stood still looking out
through the opening in the painted
picket fence
one tall picket one short picket
all the way along

and no gate in the opening

W.S. Merwin

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

Britain is full of talk right now of a legal case that threatens the theater as no other has for years. The day I arrived in London a couple of weeks ago, the papers were full of editorials and front-page stories about a decision handed down at the Old Bailey by Mr. Justice Staughton. The matter concerned a suit for "gross indecency" brought by one Mary Whitehurst against Michael Bogdanov, the director of a play called *The Romans in Britain*. The play, by Howard Brenton, a talented 40-year-old dramatist, had been staged by the National Theatre a year or so ago. Whitehurst, a longtime antipornography campaigner, is president of an organization called the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, but she brought the suit as a private citizen. That it could have been brought at all has caused much of the alarm in theatrical and civil liberties circles.

It's a complicated affair but one whose implications for British theater and artistic expression in general are grave enough to justify sorting out the facts. To begin with, the suit came about because of a simulated act of sodomy, which in the text seems entirely justified thematically. The play, I might say at this point, is an odd piece of work set in Roman Britain—Julius Caesar is a character—and in present-day Ireland. Its central theme is the way political oppression repeats itself; its style is a mixture of lyricism and raunchy street talk. And while it's no masterpiece, it surely is a serious work.

One isn't too surprised to learn that Whitehurst hasn't actually seen or read the play. "That would have done no good at all," she is quoted as saying. "People would just have said, 'Did it corrupt her?' " The good lady (delicious appearance: stocky, white-haired, strong jaw, steel-rimmed spectacles) decided on the strength of descriptions she'd been given that the scene in question could indeed corrupt others, could be an "enticement" to some men. Her suit was brought against the director, Bogdanov, because it was he who was re-

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sponsible for "procuring" the grossly indecent act or arranging to have it performed, the implication being that he ought to have primly refused to follow the playwright's instructions.

Early last year, Whitehurst asked the Director of Public Prosecutions to charge the play under Section 2 of the Theatres Act (about which more later). When she was refused, she tried to bring a private suit under the same act, but this too was rejected. Finally she went to a different law, Section 13 of the Sexual Offenses Act of 1956, a provision usually employed in prosecuting homosexual behavior in public places.

In July, Bogdanov was committed to trial, and the hearing opened on March 15. Four days later the case was abruptly dropped, but a ruling by Justice Staughton left it open to reinstatement and left open, too, a great many disturbing questions.

There is some mystery surrounding the termination of the case, but the order seems to have come from the Attorney General's office, although there are those who say that Whitehurst's solicitors hadn't been too sanguine about their chances of victory. Still, a ruling by the judge to the effect that the Sexual Offenses Act *could* apply to the theater, whether or not this particular case went to a decision, dismayed many people. The Theatre Defense Fund, an ad hoc group formed to support Bogdanov, immediately challenged the ruling and was joined by a number of editorial writers and columnists.

At the heart of the matter is the Theatres Act of 1968, which abolished the censorship powers of the Lord Chamberlain. Before that, of course, plays *had* been censored or banned, among them Harold Pinter's *Landscape*, and the 1968 act was clearly designed by Parliament to put an end to such an archaic practice. But the act's framers apparently made an important omission: they neglected to state that in addition to the abolition of official censorship, plays could not be prosecuted "under statute," that is, under any other existing law.

This omission is what enabled Whitehurst to bring her suit, and it has led Harold Hobson, the dean of English drama critics, to argue in a piece in the *Sunday Observer* entitled "Bring Back the Lord Chamberlain" that at least in the past one knew where one stood and that most official censors were more open-minded than people like Whitehurst. Though no one had taken advantage of it before, Hobson wrote, the ill-worded Theatres Act made it possible "for any person whatsoever to prosecute any play he or she dislikes."

Perhaps the greatest threat to theatrical expression in all this is the fact that the judge accepted the argument that a simulated act is no different under the law from a real one. (At an earlier hearing Graham Ross-Cornes, one of Whitehurst's solicitors, declared that "if this act took place on the street it would clearly be an offense. I see no difference if it takes place on the stage of the National.") As *The Times* of London said in an editorial, "this judicial refusal to distinguish between the simulated and the real is alarming." It doesn't take much imagination to determine what might be attacked as a result of this confusion; acting—theater—are simulation through and through.

In any event, an appeal will be made to the Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, for a parliamentary amendment to the Theatres Act, which, so loose and various is the British legal system, may or may not settle the matter. Whitelaw is likely to support it, since the government seems to have been embarrassed by Whitehurst throughout the proceedings. As for her, she gives no sign of abandoning her crusade. Asked about her legal costs, expected to be in the neighborhood of $40,000, she said: "The Lord wanted me to do this; I believe the Lord will provide." □

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Deathtrap
Evil Under the Sun

These days, murder mysteries come in two styles, traditional and chic. My preference in these matters is conservative. I like an ingeniously disposed of body, the recent owner of which was well supplied with relatives, business associates and servants, any of whom might have had good reason to wish the victim dead. I welcome the arrival on the luxurious premises of a personable sleuth, whose reputation for infallibility assures me that, however taxing the hunt, all the fences will be taken in style. I adhere, in short, to the British sport of bloodletting. Alas, when Michael Caine

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becomes involved in homicide, what follows is never that simple or decorous.

In the case of *Deathtrap*, he is an aging writer of stage thrillers whose brilliant career has been cut short by a series of flops. On the opening night of the latest disaster he receives from a former student the manuscript of a mystery so perfect in concept and execution that it is certain to be a triumphant success. To the dismay of his younger and already overstrung wife (Dyan Cannon), the failure-maddened celebrity invites the neophyte writer to their East Hampton retreat, dispatches him with a chain garrote and takes possession of the manuscript.

Have I given away the plot? If you think so, you are not familiar with the lenses, prisms and mirrors that make up the brain of Ira Levin, who wrote the Broadway hit on which this film by Sidney Lumet is based. *Deathtrap* is a comic thriller, most of the laughs springing from the sensation of having a rug pulled from beneath one's feet. It is a marvel of sophisticated depravity; it is, in fact, so steeped in sophistication that the mystery is rather upstaged by the glossy manner in which it is displayed. It has never been my fortune to be on hand when a murder occurred, but I can't believe that the principals in such an event would behave with the arch nastiness of Caine and his young colleague (Christopher Reeve). They pose and prate, reciting their lines as though for the approval of their elocution coaches, and never allow one to forget that they are a couple of actors. Nor is the suspension of disbelief at all encouraged by the presence of Irene Worth in her famous zany act. This time she is a psychic with red reflectors on her cap, who raps on doors at moments of tension and utters alarming prophecies in a nearly impenetrable Dutch accent. Almost always, and particularly with vehicles as convoluted and envenomed as Levin's, the acting should lean to the side of understatement. I think Lumet was much at fault when he encouraged his actors to make baroque spectacles of themselves.

And for all its modish perversity, *Deathtrap* resorts at its climax to one of the most dubious of thriller devices. As the fever rises, distant thunder is to be heard, and when the passions break loose, so does the summer storm. The lights fail and crucial moves are revealed only by the strobe flashes of lightning. Fortunately, whodunit protocol relieves me from divulging what I so imperfectly saw during the inopportune blackout. Murder mysteries, I hold, are a relatively innocent form of amusement. *Deathtrap* is anything but that.

Evil Under the Sun is more my kind of mystery, though a poorly executed example of it. The plot, from the prolific Agatha Christie, serves well enough. Though strewn with red herrings, it seems in retrospect neatly carved and fitted. To be sure, a prudent killer might have worried that the plot depended too heavily on luck.

The setting, too, is reassuring—a small island in the Adriatic where the charming and resourceful ex-mistress of a European notable runs a discreet resort hotel for the decadent rich. The trouble with the film is that its scriptwriter, Anthony Shaffer, and the director, Guy Hamilton, apparently feared, what with the vogue for morbid exercises like *Deathtrap*, that Dame Agatha's talent was somewhat dated. Accordingly, they decided to help her out. Similar assistance is sometimes given to Shakespeare, with similarly unfortunate results.

In the first place, the villainy is woefully slow getting started. The guests arrive on the island by ones and twos, making entrances in costumes so showy that I began to wonder if I were assisting, not at an impending crime but at a fashion show of high-styled beachwear. Even the arrival of Hercule Poirot (this time it is Peter Ustinov's turn to play the self-important, elaborately courteous Belgian detective) fails to set the evil working. Interminable minutes are allotted to revealing, in detail, the offensiveness of each guest, and since Christie, for all her skill with puzzles, had no talent for characterization, the excellent cast (Diana Rigg, Maggie Smith, Sylvia Miles, Roddy McDowell and James Mason, among others) can do little but ham away at the obvious. Whodunits, as I've just said, are a form of entertainment, and it helps, therefore, if at least some of the people under suspicion are tolerably good company. None of those in *Evil Under the Sun* measure up, even the reliably comic Poirot being subdued by the baleful and implausibly strident company he is forced to keep. It's too bad. After a long winter, a bit of slaughter on a remote and beautiful southern island would have been welcome. □

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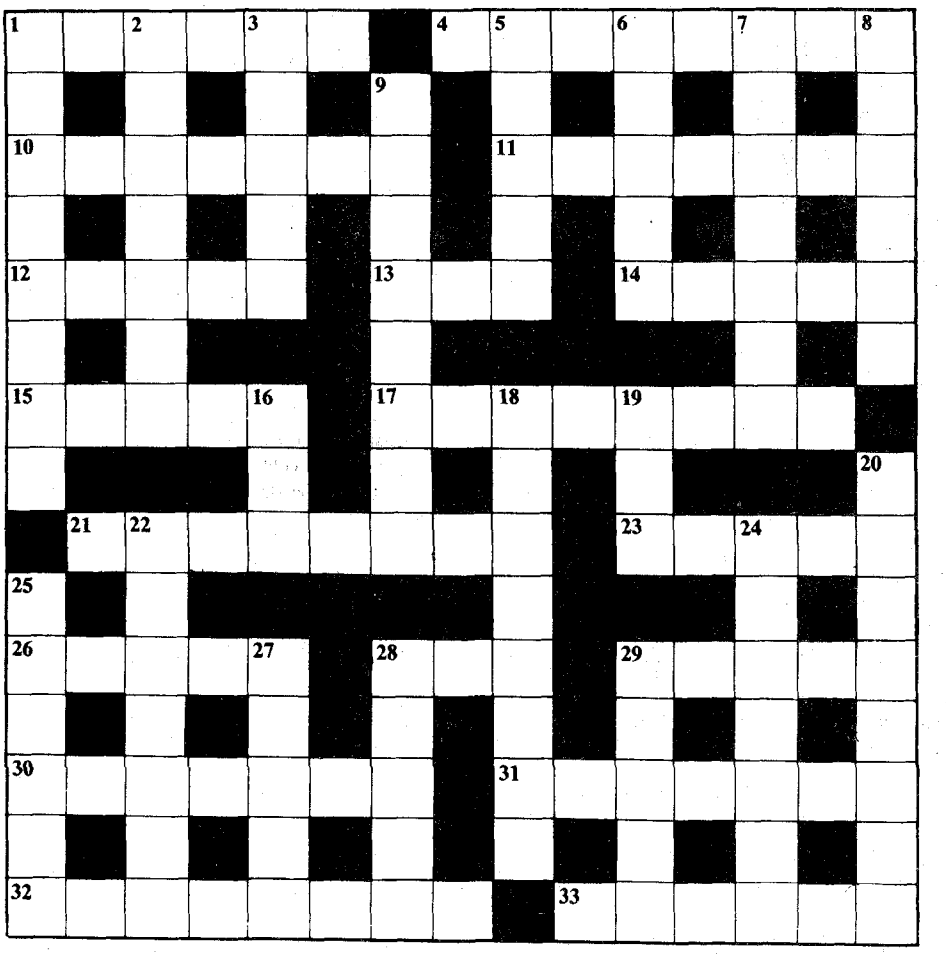

ACROSS

1 Stewed fig, say—to become a substance possessing perfect molecular mobility. (6)
4 and 2 down Everything sounds like the empty spot on which she has a report. (3,5,7)
10 See 20 down
11 and 12 Car rental for those difficult to make happy? (4,2,6)
13 and 28 down Catches the small type that goes on the nostrils. (8)
14 Can't handle what you might take for a cough? (5)
15 and 17 Wheels of stone for those who keep their noses to them—or just monkey around to collect for such people? (5,8)
21 Objects to trials for paid performers? (8)
23 Gypsy, according to Strauss, with possibly a lot of gold on. (5)
26 See 16 down
28 This way for the country, or this man for William, though perhaps associated with neither. (3)
29 The limits of a morning piece. (5)
30 A dealer in a strange land, with her around! (7)
31 With no wind in these branches, one would be really still. (7)
32 Had trouble with vermin around, and found asylum. (8)
33 With a yegg, no good showing drink! (3-3)

DOWN

1 Swelling the mob with one having pride, perhaps? (8)
2 See 4 across
3 Not genuine fleas, appearing so. (5)
5 As barriers, they're laughable! (2-3)
6 Reputedly all of us are fifty, when the word gets around. (5)
7 Nothing put badly with our flow this way. (7)
8 What one does with the film being open to attack. (6)
9 Sprinkles pa's serge before it gets ironed out. (8)
16 and 26 across You might swear in front of them, but not with a sign that many have. (8)
18 Where one might find writing ability, and draw one figure within another. (8)
19 A pat with the hand shows the opposite of good upbringing. (3)
20 and 10 across A lot of people lost their heads while they clicked, reputedly, in literature. (8,7)
22 Deering, perhaps, made a 7, by the sound of it, and acted like a ruler. (7)
24 Shine up an image, perhaps; once you get over it, your turn isn't expected. (7)
25 The chief has a pain with what is written up about it. (6)
27 A lot of shooting up, resulting in something like fifty-five to nothing. (5)
28 See 13 across
29 How we go in agreement? (5)

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